

## **The 'Nadwiślański' Ethnographic Park in Wygiełzów**

The 'Nadwiślański' Ethnographic Park in Wygiełzów is a regional park which represents the folk culture of the Western Cracow People who live here on both banks of the Vistula River to the west of Cracow. On the 50000 m<sup>2</sup> of the picturesquely formed terrain there are 25 historical wooden objects of small architecture which are grouped in the following sectors: provincial, rural and court. It was not originally one village. The buildings have been brought here from many different places.

The Krakow regional costume is considered to be the best-known of Polish folk costumes. As a result of historical events, and the influence of patriotic as well as artistic ideas, the Krakow costume has acquired a symbolic meaning. This is especially true of the man's white overcoat called "sukmana" and a red square cap, decorated with peacock feathers. These two elements and the white and red colours came to symbolize the Poles and Poland and the Krakow regional costume has become a national costume.

### 8. The oil mill from Dąbrowa Szlachecka from the second half of the 19th century, rebuilt in 1902. The oil mill has its original furnishings.

In the oil mill oil was pressed from grains of oily plants such as: flax and hems. Its production started from pressing grain with the feet. Then crushed grain was roasted in a kettle on a stove. After mixing it with water the mixture was put in the oil press. Oil was obtained by manual, rhythmic beating. Oil was still produced in this way during World War II. Its production was eventually stopped in 1945.

### 9. The smithy from Liszki from the second half of the 19th century

The 19<sup>th</sup>-century smithy is equipped with the furnace with an open fire. Firstly, charcoal and then, from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, coal was used as fuel. Glowing embers were fed with a leather pair of bellows, by which air was blown in. Hot iron was hammered on an anvil. The heaviest hammer weighed 10 kg.

A separate group were tools used for shoeing horses, for example a special knife for hooves. Apart from shoeing horses, nails, hinges, locks and all hardware for doors, chests and trunks were made here. Smiths made iron rings of wheels as well as iron parts of wooden farming equipment.

The smith was highly respected among villagers. Thanks to the smithy a lot of new inventions reached a village.

He was believed to be a specialist in horse diseases and he also helped people with taking out their aching teeth.

### 10. The cottage from Podolsze from 1862.

In the kitchen: furniture, household equipment and kitchenware. A rich set of equipment used for washing, ironing and mangling can be seen.

The chamber with a big baking oven and equipment used during bread baking: wooden vessels, a device for sweeping ash away from the baking oven, a device for taking out ash, a shovel and bread tins.

The room in the village administrator's house shows the decor characteristic for Easter.

Traditionally at Easter [on Holy Saturday] food was put in baskets and taken to church to be blessed. Rich housewives prepared really big baskets full of food. Inside they put bread, smoked bacon, dairy produce, salt, vinegar and pepper. Sometimes they invited the priest to their house to bless the food there.

Poor people put chopped wood at the bottom of their baskets and on top the little food they could afford.

In each basket there were eggs died different colours. Natural pigments were used for it, for example onion skin, oak bark and green rye. Among many different decorative techniques used by people the batik technique is the oldest one; it consist in writing on an egg using hot wax.

The engraving technique is a much younger one. It consists in engraving / drawing ornaments with a sharp instrument on an egg dyed in one colour.

During World War II, due to the lack of food, people started to bless small, symbolic amounts of food. It has been like that since then.

#### 12. The cottage of a rich peasant from Przeciszów from the year 1837.

The roof is coated with straw. The interior is characteristic of the early 20th century. Like most houses here, this has a basement too. In the hallway and the kitchen you can see tools for the processing of flax, spinning thread and weaving canvas workshop. People both lived and worked here.

Inside there is a shoemaker's workbench. In the corner there is a workshop of the country shoemaker. We can see basic tools for the production of shoes and their repair and standards of shoes.

In the hallway to the left there is a classroom. Next to it is the teacher's room. He/She lived here together with the family. Old schools were located in peasant cottages. The teacher taught two classes at the same time. When one did quiet exercise, the other practiced reading aloud. Sometimes the teacher made breaks and used the students to help around the house, for example, to help with peeling potatoes, cleaning or chopping wood.

There is a wicker workshop and wicker products. The basic material for weaving baskets was wicker growing wild on the banks of rivers. Thanks to the easy accessibility to the material wickerwork became the most popular home manufacture. For ages almost each peasant living in the villages by the Vistula river could weave baskets for his own needs. The secrets of making them were passed from generation to generation. In a number of families wickerwork became an additional but very important source of income. Wickerwork traditions are still alive in his region. The museum invites visitors to see people weaving baskets and to buy wicker products during folk events organized here.

#### 15. The poor cottage from Płaza from the end of the 19th century

Inside there is a room and a small hall with a clay floor. The size and furnishings are typical of poor rural / village people who used to (hire themselves to) work for rich farmers. In the room there are very few pieces of furniture, equipment and utensils. Next to the bed the so-called "husiaczka", a kind of a linen cradle can be seen. On the pole wood herbs are hung and in the chest next to the bed all necessary accessories of a village herbalist can be found, including some dressing materials.

Practical medicines were obtained by people from the surrounding nature and by the observation of the animal world. The medicines were first of all different herbs as well as medicaments of animal and mineral origins. People used mainly herbs collected from meadows and fields but also the ones grown in the gardens. It was believed that the most effective plants in the folk medicine were the plants blessed at church on the holidays of Our Lady of the Herbs and Corpus Christi.

#### 16. The chimneyless cottage from Rozkochów from the year 1813 with a hood for carrying away the smoke.

This object represents the oldest type of one-building farmstead in the museum, joining under one roof the residential part as well as the stables for the cattle. It possesses old fire installations without the outside chimney. The smoke from the open fireplace went up to the attic and was carried away with the use of a hood. In 1895 an administrative order was introduced to build chimneys in all newly-build houses and to modernize the old ones.

In the exhibition in the hall: a workbench for casting wax candles which consists of a large wheel from a cart with hooks for candlewicks and a set of containers used for sprinkling hot wax.

The cottages has one residential room and the life of the whole family concentrated here during the autumn and winter seasons. Next to the stove there is a table at which meals were eaten by the whole family from one big bowl. The room has a décor characteristic for Christmas Eve with the "orchard" typical for the Cracow region.

The room was the kitchen, the bedroom and the laundry for all the members of the household. Food for animals was prepared here and in winter farm animals were kept here by the stove.

#### 21. Church from Ryczów

The church comes from the early 17th century. The architecture and style were shaped over a few centuries. The left side altar is the oldest element. A main decorative motives are flowers on plant twigs with paintings of busts of the 12 apostles. There are images of 4 bishops on the wall next to the windows. On the choir there is the organ from the 19th century. The bas-reliefs made of wood are contemporary and represent the way of the cross of Jesus. Sunday services are still held here. For 20 years the annual concert of the Festival Chamber Organ Music has been organized here. Next to the building there is an alarm belfry (from Nowa Góra) from the 20th century.

#### 23. Manor house from Drogina.

This typical Polish manor house was built in 1730 in Drogina. The magnificent wooden manor is from the outside plastered with clay and whitened. The Polish style mansard roof is covered with shingle. The columnar porch is decorated with the coat of arms. The manor has a transitive arrangement of rooms and a centrally situated hall. It is open to the public so you can see the inside of the house.

### **EASTER DAYS**

Easter is equal to welcoming spring, whose 1<sup>st</sup> herald is pussy-willow called in Polish "bazie" . Many Easter customs and rites show that the Christian ceremonies overlapped the old pagan custom of welcoming the New Year. The spring equinox and the awakening of nature to life were seen in old cultures as the culminating point. People celebrated rituals which were to provide prosperity and fertility. Over the centuries symbols and rituals associated with this season acquired a Christian dimension, these may include Easter palms, Easter eggs and blessing of fire and water.

Great powers were attributed to the Easter palms. They were believed to help people stave off bad luck, magic spells and danger. The palm was a symbol of life. It brought happiness and success. Palm leaves blessed in church were hung behind pictures in people's homes, over the door and on

top of the roof as protection against lightning strikes. Swallowing one of the buds from a pussy willow branch was supposed to cure sore throat and prevent the recurrence of this ailment. On Holy Thursday small crosses were made from palm leaves and on the next day they were placed in the fields to protect the crops against hail storms. When cattle and sheep were turned out to graze for the first time in spring the owner had to strike the animals with a blessed palm leave to ensure their health. Special decorative Easter palms are still made every year and taken to church on Palm Sunday. They are made from willow and hazel boughs, cane, artificial flowers, boxwood, dried grass leaves, ribbons and tissue paper arranged together. People never throw them away – they must be burnt and the ash is used on Ash Wednesday the next year.

All week women and their daughters were tidying their houses and farmyards. Walls were being whitewashed, rooms and tools cleaned. On Maundy Thursday bells were silent in all churches. On that day boys ran around villages carrying wooden rattles announcing in this way the beginning of the Easter Triduum. On Good Friday before dawn people had to wash in a stream or river to protect themselves from boils and other diseases and worries. On this day, it was common practice to make fires in orchards. The fires were placed in such a way that the smoke fumigated the trees, which was supposed to protect them from vermin and make sure they will bring fruit. On that day people observed intense fasting both in terms of quantity and the type of food. Holy Saturday was the day when people took part in the ceremony of blessing the fire, water and food. In the morning women prepared baskets with food, including a loaf of bread, hard-boiled eggs, horse radish, ham, sausage, cheese, butter, salt, pepper and vinegar. On top they put a lamb made of sugar or plaster. They used to bring for blessing as much food as they were going to eat during Easter. The baskets were decorated with boxwood twigs and myrtle. All the food in the basket had a symbolic meaning. The ham symbolized the body of the crucified Christ, sausage – the ropes He was tied with, vinegar and pepper – the drink He was given on the cross, bread – the bread Christ shared with His disciples during the Last Supper. All parishioners took part in the blessing, which took place in front of the church or the landlord's house. After the food was brought back home, it was locked in the larder and could only be eaten after the Mass of the Resurrection.

Among the blessed food in an Easter basket there were also eggs – the so-called pisanki - symbolizing the new life. In the Cracow region it wasn't a custom to decorate them but in other parts of Poland women specialized in painting Easter eggs. To colour them natural paints were used, e.g. onion peel (it coloured eggs brown), young shoots of wheat (to make them green) or extract of oak bark (to make them black). The oldest method of decorating eggs was the batik (wax-resist dyeing) technique. It consisted in writing or drawing decorations on eggs with melted wax through a metal funnel or with a pin. Then the eggs were boiled in the natural paint and finally the wax was removed. A newer technique involved etching a pattern on previously dyed eggs. Yet another technique was covering eggs with wool thread. Depending on the technique, we can call such eggs – kraszanki, pisanki or owijanki. The blessed pisanki were believed to have miraculous healing powers. According to folk beliefs they gave protection against evil forces. They were used in medicine and magic, to make love potions and bring a rich harvest. Given as a present they were also a sign of kind feelings and affection.

Eggs, shared and eaten during the Easter breakfast, were believed to ensure good health, fertility and prosperity. Their shells scattered around the farmyard and orchard were supposed to scare off pests, improve the egg-laying capability of hens and obtain a rich crop of fruit. They also used as a bribe by girls who wanted to avoid getting drenched on Easter Monday. Eggs were viewed as a symbol of new life. According to legend the first "pisanki" were decorated by the tears of the Blessed

Virgin Mary. She prepared a basket of eggs that she intended to present to Pontius Pilate when begging him to set Her Son free. Climbing the stairs, she tripped, and the pisanki scattered all over the world.

On Holy Saturday, the victuals which were prohibited during Lent are blessed by the priests. In the past people also used to participate in ceremonies during which water and fire were blessed. This was believed to have been done in remembrance of Pilate's washing of hands and the Apostles warming themselves by a fire on the night Jesus was betrayed and arrested. After returning home, the home would be sprinkled with the water sanctified by a priest. Some of it was kept for use in time of need. For instance, the holy water was sprinkled on the grain to be sown and potato seeds to be planted, etc. The fire was regarded as a symbol of life-giving strength and power of regeneration.

Easter Sunday would begin with the Resurrection Mass. After the mass people returned home to eat ceremonial breakfast. The basket with the blessed food was brought in and the mother shared its contents with the family members. Horseradish with salt and pepper was eaten first to burn out evil and ensure good health. Then it was time for eggs, bread with ham and sausage. Grain coffee with milk was served. The leftovers were not allowed to go to waste. They were either burned or fed to domestic animals. Egg shells were buried in the ground to prevent moles from burrowing under the fields. People stayed at home until the High Mass. Generally this day, just like Christmas Days, was meant to be spent with family. On Easter Sunday one should avoid paying visits and refrain from doing any work.

On Easter Monday, also called Dyngus Day (Śmigus-Dyngus) or Wet Monday (lany poniedziałek) another old and unique custom is practiced. People sprinkle, sometimes even pour water on one another. In the old days boys armed with buckets of water chased girls trying to drench them or throw them into a river. These days buckets are usually replaced with squirt guns and this humorous tradition is equally popular in rural and urban areas. Another custom associated with Easter Monday called "chodzenie z ogródkiem (traczykiem)" was about going from door to door with a small wheel cart, dressed in green leaves to make it resemble a garden with a plaster figure of the paschal lamb or Jesus Christ holding a banner in the middle of it. Those pushing the cart would recite rhymes and ask for gifts, usually eggs, a piece of sausage and the like.

## **The tradition of glass painting**

Among the numerous decorative techniques used by folk artists glass painting is probably of the one of the greatest interest. The reason for it is its uniqueness. The tradition of glass painting is very long and it originated in Byzantium. In Europe the technique was known in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was used to make religious paintings and decorate objects of functional art items, mainly for the middle class.

At the end of the 18th century there was a change in public interest in the art of glass painting changed and it became increasingly popular among peasants/in rural communities/areas. Glass painting became more widespread in traditional glassmaking regions, especially in mountainous areas. In Poland the largest centres were established in the Carpathian Mountains and the Sudetes. There was a great need for images of saints. People, whose life on the land was hard, looked up to them for support and consolation / comfort? The main role of the pictures was protection against evil and that's why images of saints were made in numerous copies. Apart from religious themes, one of the most common figure painted on glass was Janosik – the outlaw living in the Tatra mountains – and his men. They took from the rich and gave to the poor, and hence became local heroes. They were popular in the folk tradition and many stories were told about them, mainly in the Podhale region and Slovakia.

In peasants' cottages pictures were hung high up under the ceiling. In rich peoples' houses there were plenty of paintings hanging densely next to one another and forming a picture gallery.

Paintings were mainly made by small family workshops and also by glassworks, for which it was a non-core activity. They could be purchased at fairs, also parish fairs, and from peddlers, who sometimes had to walk hundreds of miles before a picture was finally sold.

There are two main techniques of painting on glass surface: hot and cold. The “hot” technique requires special ovens to preserve the colours in high temperature. Artists often made their own paints using various natural ingredients. Each of them had his own unique way of mixing paints and making pictures. There are two main types of paints used in glass painting: opaque and transparent. Glass paintings are actually painted under the glass. The paint is applied in reverse order. When the painting is completed the glass is turned over and displayed with the paint behind the glass. Details or accents which in traditional painting would ordinarily be painted last, are painted first and this is the hardest part.

Once this first layer has dried the spaces between contour lines are filled with colour and then the glass background is painted last. Painting is thus being done in reverse order and the working image is on the back of the glass which serves both as a support and a protective varnish. This method helps to achieve deeper tones of colour additionally strengthened by the shiny surface of glass. Glass paintings were often modeled after paintings created using other techniques or after woodcuts. They had a decorative character and featured intense colours, contours that deformed space and figural representations as well as naïve symbolism.

The decline of glass painting was due to a general change in taste as far as art was concerned and the emergence of chromolithographic prints which could be mass produced and were much cheaper.